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C O N F I D E N T I A L COLOMBO 000705

SIPDIS

OFFICIAL INFORMAL

FOR SA/INS

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TAGS: [AMGT](#) [CE](#) [MV](#)

SUBJECT: OFFICIAL INFORMAL NUMBER 063 (04/28/04)

Classified by DCM James F. Entwistle for reasons 1.5 (b) and (d).

CONTENTS: JVP MINISTERS, DEPUTY MINISTERS SWORN IN
- RUMORS OF LOW-LEVEL SLFP-UNP DISCUSSIONS
- FORMER FM RESIGNS FROM PARTY
- NORWEGIAN VISIT

JVP MINISTERS, DEPUTY MINISTERS SWORN IN

[11.](#) (U) FYI. After much wrangling with the President over the content of their ministerial portfolios (see Colombo 702, and previous), the JVP accepted the compromise offered by Kumaratunga and eight JVP MPs assumed their minister- and deputy-ministerships in an April 28 ceremony. The JVP took control of the Agricultural, Lands, and Irrigation; Cultural Affairs and National Heritage; Rural Economy and Rural Industries; Fisheries and Aquatic Resources ministries. We will be providing bio-data. (POL)

RUMORS OF LOW-LEVEL SLFP-UNP DISCUSSIONS

[12.](#) (C) FYI. Contacts have told us that members of President Kumaratunga's Sri Lanka Freedom Party (SLFP) are in low-level discussions with members of the United National Party (UNP) about the possible formation of a "national" government. (The DCM heard a similar report from the Australian High Commissioner, a well-informed diplomat.) No further details are available. At this point, it seems unlikely that either the President or the UNP leadership will put the past behind them and take the big plunge. Should the two parties reach an agreement, however, it could be a way for the President to ease out of her alliance with the JVP, which has already proved to be contentious. The UNP is also not thrilled to be working closely with the TNA. (POL)

FORMER FM RESIGNS FROM PARTY

[13.](#) (SBU) FYI. Former Foreign Minister Tyrone Fernando has officially resigned from the UNP via a letter to former PM Wickremesinghe. Fernando has been quite public of late about his ire with the UNP after he was not accorded a parliamentary seat on the UNP's "National List." He wrote a public letter of complaint to former PM Wickremesinghe in the days immediately following the election (see Colombo 669). There are rumors that Fernando will join the UNP's rival, the UPFA, but there is no confirmation of this. (POL)

NORWEGIAN VISIT

[14.](#) (C) Helgesen and Solheim arrive Saturday, supposed to see CBK on Sunday. Solheim will then go to the Wannai while Helgesen will continue to Indonesia to meet a longstanding commitment there. The Ambassador (in Jaffna today) is hosting a co-chair lunch Thursday. (DCM)

LUNSTEAD